

PM statement at Ukraine press conference: 1 February 2022

Thank you very much President Zelenskyy and thank you for welcoming us all to your Mariyynski palace here, it's absolutely fantastic to be back in Kyiv and to see the excitement, the buzz of this capital which has changed a lot since I was last here five years ago, in many interesting and positive ways.

But we have to face a grim reality which is that as we stand here today Volodymyr, more than 100,000 Russian troops are gathering on your border in perhaps the biggest demonstration of hostility towards Ukraine in our lifetimes.

And the potential deployment dwarves the 30,000 troops Russia sent to invade Crimea in 2014. Since that time of course, as everybody knows, more than 13,000 Ukrainians have been killed and Ukraine has been plunged into nearly a decade of war.

It goes without saying that a further Russian invasion of Ukraine would be a political disaster, a humanitarian disaster, in my view would also be, for Russia, for the world, a military disaster as well. And the potential invasion completely flies in the face of President Putin's claims to be acting in the interest of the Ukrainian people.

The UK and other countries will be judged, by the people of the Ukraine and the world, on how we respond and how we help.

Since 2015 the UK has trained over 22,000 Ukrainian military personnel and provided £2.2 million worth of non-lethal military equipment to Ukraine.

Two weeks ago we sent anti-tank weaponry to strengthen Ukraine's defences further.

Today I have announced a further £88 million of UK funding to support good governance and energy independence in Ukraine. This will bolster your efforts Volodymyr, and those of others to build a free and prosperous Ukrainian society, free of malign influences.

Alongside other countries we are also preparing a package of sanctions and other measures to be enacted the moment the first Russian toe-cap crosses further into Ukrainian territory.

And we have done all this and prepared all this, not as a show of hostility towards Russia, but as a demonstration that we will always stand up for freedom, democracy and Ukrainian sovereignty in the face of aggression.

In recent days I have spoken to the leaders of the United States, France, Germany, Italy, the NATO Secretary General and others – all agree on the fundamental importance of supporting Ukraine's self-determination.

Because the people of Ukraine have the inalienable right to choose how they are governed and indeed which organisations they aspire to join.

And as your friend and partner, the UK will always uphold that right.

It is vital that Russia steps back and chooses a path of diplomacy and I believe that is still possible.

We are keen to engage in dialogue, of course we are, we have the sanctions ready, we're providing military support and we will also intensify our economic co-operation.

Because we are a firm and enduring ally of Ukraine and a supporter of Ukraine's territorial sovereignty and integrity.

Thank you all very much.